

DDA 76-1851

15 April 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Angus Thuermer
Assistant to the Director

FROM : John F. Blake
Deputy Director for Administration

SUBJECT : CIA Museum

1. You requested comments regarding the establishment of a CIA museum. While, admittedly, there are many intelligence artifacts, memoranda, collection devices, etc., within the Agency which would be of historical interest, I am not convinced that the establishment of a museum per se is a good venture. In the first place, space in Headquarters building is of such critical need that it does not seem in the best interest of the people housed in Headquarters to take up additional space for a museum. There is some legitimate criticism that computers are taking over desirable office space. For understandable reasons, computer expansion in this building is necessary and adjustments have to be made. I do not feel a sense of urgency toward establishing a museum which, indeed, would carve out still more office space. Further, the establishment of a formal museum would be quite time-consuming and would require continuing care, attendance and upkeep. A staff would be required to handle the job and, in view of the personnel ceiling reductions over the years, it seems this is a luxury we could forego.

2. On the positive side and in recognition of the fact that there are many items of historical value and interest, I would propose that a more reasonable approach to their retention might be to levy responsibility on those Divisions and Offices having the materials to identify, catalogue and store. As we have done in the past, exhibits of a given theme can be held in the 1-D corridor of the Headquarters

building. I can cite the U-2 exhibit, the SE Division exhibit on Russian artifacts, and the EA Division Chinese exhibit. It seems this less formal approach would require much less care and maintenance and would, at the same time, make certain that materials of historical value are identified and catalogued. It also seems to me that periodic exhibits on the first floor would maintain a higher level of interest on the part of observers than a static museum.

3. I am aware that other agencies and the military have museums and, perhaps, there would be some merit in this Agency having one. On one hand, I honestly feel there are some overriding factors to be considered against a formalized museum. On the other hand, if a consensus finds support for the concept to which you agree, we will provide whatever assistance is needed to launch the effort.

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Background: DDA 76-1714, Memo from Asst/DCI, Subject:
Public Relation Visits to CIA and a CIA Museum

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